

NEWS RELEASE

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IDAHO STANDARDS ACHIEVEMENT TEST PILOT SUMMARY DATA REVIEW

The Idaho State Board of Education and its Assessment and Accountability Commission were presented with summary data and scores from the Idaho Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) pilot, which was administered to all 9th grade students this Spring.

The summary data and scores were compiled as part of the effort to evaluate, or test, the test itself, not to begin evaluating student performance. Although some initial reports from teachers and students pegged the test as too easy, the data shows that the average student answered approximately 60-64% of the questions correctly. This figure is in line with the initial design of the test and indicates that the difficulty level was appropriate. Since it was anticipated that the average percentage of correct answers would be around 50%, Idaho students performed well within the expected range. Although one may tend to interpret a score of 58%-64% as rather low, the test was purposefully designed with the intent that students would score in this range, since a great deal more information about a student's breadth of knowledge on a subject matter can be gleaned from a test that is challenging for all students, rather than just for some.

The summary data also quells some initial concerns that the method used to deliver the test would affect student performance. No substantive difference in scores was shown from students who took the paper version versus those who took the computer-delivered version of the test. It was also reported that the administration of the test, a new experience for teachers and students throughout the state, went very well. "Given the pace of the project, and the initial apprehension expressed by some, the state and the school districts deserve commendation for making this first pilot a successful one." Karen McGee, State Board of Education member and Interim Director of Assessment and Accountability.

Although initial indications are good, analysis of the test will continue. Beginning this week, teachers from around the state will meet with the testing contractor (Northwest Evaluation Association) and State Department of Education officials to scrutinize the test items for fairness, bias, reliability, and to determine if the questions accurately measure Idaho's achievement standards.